sections of the society particularly SC/ST population. In almost all the schemes/programmes adequate coverage of the Scheduled Castes beneficiaries is ensured.

(b) The NSFDC has extended benefits to 2,12,121 Scheduled Caste beneficiaries in addition to the 281 Scheduled Castes artisans.

(c) NSFDC's monitoring mechanism has been strengthened by way of (i) submission of Quarterly Progress Reports and (ii) periodic Utilization Drives undertaken by NSFDC, and (iii) random inspections of beneficiary units by NSFDC Officials and independent agencies.

Declaration of other backward classes

1463. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chettri, Bhawan and Newar Castes have been declared as Other Backward Classes (OBC) by the State Government of Sikkim;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government to recognize these castes as OBCs in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) and (b) The Government of Sikkim vide Extra Ordinary Gazette Notification No. 308, dated 9th September, 2003 has declared the three Communities viz. (i) BAHUN, (ii) CHETTRI and (iii) NEWAR as Other Backward Classed for the State of Sikkim.

(c) Does not arise.

Construction of night shelters

1464. SHRI T.T. V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to build night shelters to accommodate homeless persons in every district;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c) Night shelters are set up by the State Governments as per the requirements subject to availability of funds. Insofar as the Central Government is concerned, there is no such proposal.

Physically and mentally challenged children

1465. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ever conducted any research to ascertain why large number of children are physically and mentally challenged in the tribal areas of Central India, such as Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the measures contemplated to improve the situation;

(c) whether Government propose to offer institutional support to these children; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (d) According to the NSSO, 2002 prevalence rate of disability (number of disabled persons per lakh population) in the mentioned States and All India are given below:—

State	Prevalence Rate
Rajasthan	1468
Jharkhand	1236
Orissa	459
Chattisgarh	1810
Madhya Pradesh	1680
All India	1755